

The Chimes

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Modesto Church of the Brethren

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Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.

I want to thank all my faith family for your words & prayers of support as I served in southernmost Texas, near the US-Mexico border. It was an experience that transcends words, but I'll try to share a glimpse of it with you here.~ Linda Owen



On May 10, I flew to McAllen, Texas, to join 4 other volunteers serving for 2 weeks at Catholic Charities' Humanitarian Respite Center (HRC). Sponsored by our denominations' Children's Disaster Services, we interacted with immigrant children and their families that had just been released from the local ICE detention center. Weeks or even months earlier they had left their homes in Central and South America and set off on a treacherous journey north to and through Mexico to the Rio Grande River. There they had crossed the US-Mexico border illegally and then immediately turned themselves in to the border patrol as refugees seeking asylum.

After spending some days in the detention center for processing and providing the name of a sponsor waiting for them in the US, each family had been given a court date to plead their case sometime in the future and then were released with temporary legal status to travel to their sponsors' homes across the US. At that point they were invited to come to the Respite Center, where they were tested for COVID and then welcomed to spend several days receiving rest, food, showers, clean clothes, legal advice, and help in arranging for their travel to their new homes in the US. In the words of founder Sister Norma Pimentel, the goal of the respite center is to "restore human dignity" to these travelers who had just endured inhumane conditions to give their children a chance for a good life.

These young families had left their homes to escape extreme poverty, the effects of natural disasters, and rampant violent criminal activity and corruption. On their trek they had endured horrific threats from dehydration in the desert to confronting "coyotes" and cartels that demanded money in exchange for their safety or even their lives. If one wonders whether the conditions they were escaping were all that dire, they have only to think about what it would take to cause parents to lead their children into such unimaginable danger.



Our delightful assignment at the respite center was to create a play space for the children and to welcome and interact with them as they enjoyed "just being kids" once again. The children's smiles and giggles as they chased bubbles, played corn hole & UNO, shared books, and expressed their creativity with their drawings, paintings, and 3-D structures of magnetic tiles, Duplo blocks, and Play Doh were music to our ears - and to their parents' ears too.



All the folks we worked with spoke only Spanish. Two of us with some fluency in Spanish served as translators, with help from the Google Translator app. But most of our interchange with the children only called for basic expressions like "hola," "me gusta" (I like it), "que bonita" (how beautiful) and the international "ta-da" when a task was completed. These were wonderful children to "play" with - not a one demanding, complaining, or "entitled" child in the bunch. (I can say the same of the adults too.) We shared many heart-warming moments but also heart-tugging times when a family would come by to say they were on their way to the airport or bus station for the next leg of their journey. Tears were shed with heartfelt hugs and "Vayan con Dios."

Did our time in McAllen really make a difference? It's impossible to answer for the people we served there, but I do know it made a difference for me. In addition to the uplifts from the children, I was encouraged to realize the widespread support the center receives from the town of McAllen and from all over the US. All of the services are provided with no government help. We met volunteers who were there to cook, serve food, cut hair, distribute donated clothes and reading glasses to the families, and provide legal advice. But the biggest difference in me is my willingness now to speak up to folks like the woman beside me on my flight home who made disparaging comments about "those illegals." I have to tell them about what I've learned.

If you would like to be inspired by the soft-spoken dynamo Sister Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus whose efforts have helped hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the last 8 years, just Google her name.

Final Note - I have agreed to share more about my experience in Texas during our morning worship service on July 25. I welcome any questions in the meantime.



Sunday in-person worship continues weekly at Modesto Church of the Brethren. If you prefer, you may continue following the worship service online at the address below.





Jim and Marye Martinez ask for prayers for their daughter Sandra, who is in ICU with heart and diabetes issues. Please remember Jim and Marye in your prayers too.

Prayers for the life of Graham Huber and prayers for the comfort of his family.

Gail Heisel remembers her parents, John and Doris Heisel.

Carole Greathouse has a joy that her brother, Jeff Glass had a heart ablation and is recovering successfully in San Diego.

Sheri Sampson asks for prayers for her friend Andrea.

Linda Sesser has a joy at seeing the children enjoying Peace Week.

Allison Sampson asks prayers for her dad, her cousin Liv and for Shaun and Kelly Gepley.

Luella Cole asks for prayers for her grandson Will who was in the hospital for a procedure Thursday and is now at home recuperating.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

We've come a long way through all the challenges of 'meeting' for worship within the limitations of the pandemic lock-down. Our transition from 'in person' to virtual worship was fraught with many uncertainties and anxieties as to how to make it all happen. As we learned from our mistakes, the uneven quality of worship in the beginning gave way to a more consistent and better quality of online worship. A big thank you to everyone for hanging in there through all the bumps, detours and technical glitches along the way, whether in worship online or 'in person'

As we anticipated the eventual return to the sanctuary for worship, we stepped out in faith to purchase a new camera system designed for churches that would enable us to stream worship from the sanctuary while simultaneously providing 'in person' worship. However, implementation of this complex Pro Presenter software was a HUGE learning curve for the Worship planners and also for the A/V Sound teams. A BIG thank you to all those who have worked tirelessly to enable worship to continue through the challenges, whether online or 'in person'.

(Continued on the next page)

The Worship & Spiritual Life Commission is grateful to the Worship Team (Kim Boardman, Mary Pieczarka, Johnathan Goodrich & Kelly Gepley) who have worked tirelessly with Pastor Andrew Sampson to provide meaningful & creative worship experiences during this uncertain time.

And many thanks to our essential Audio-Visual Personnel, specifically to Jim Boardman for manning the sound board faithfully over the months and to Maddy Beth Harty, who rose to the challenge of operating the new camera system every Sunday since our return in April to 'in person' worship.

Please remember to thank these 'behind the scenes' volunteers who have been 'Daring Greatly' in the midst of trying times, along with all the 'up front' volunteers who have been leading worship, doing Time with Children, providing music or decorating the worship table without fanfare! Kudos to the 'village of volunteers' who continue to work together to enable everyone to connect in worship 'together', whether at home or in the sanctuary.





We have had such a good turnout for the Take-Out dinners, that we want to continue to provide one meal a month throughout the summer. And, since the COVID restrictions have been reduced, we are changing the format of the dinner to: **Eat-Inside**, which means you eat dinner in The Gathering Place with tables spaced out appropriately; and Eat-Outside, which means you can take your dinner outside to the back lawn area and eat it outside (weather permitting). Hopefully this will provide more opportunity for community sharing, comradery, and exposing the lower half of our faces. We will provide Take-Out boxes if you prefer to pack your dinner to go. Please enter the church with masks up while you fill your plates, and then lower them to eat.

Mark your calendars for June 23 @ 5:30 pm. If you feel like bringing your own table service, that would help with the cleanup effort. And if you have a favorite lawn chair, you can bring that too. Let's celebrate the summer and each other as we gather to break bread -- or in this case, baked potato with toppings, corn on the cob, salad, and dessert.

We ask that you continue to call or text in your reservation for dinner to help us prepare enough food for the gathering. COB: 209 523-1438 or Peggy: 209 815-3095. Please reserve by Sunday, June 20.



Are You Ready? http://camppeacefulpines.org/

Register now for the 2021 summer camp season!

Early registration is discounted for a limited time!



After a long unanticipated break, we are pleased to be able to invite you to attend camp this year to rejuvenate your mind, body and soul in the kingdom He has created for us.

Register now!

We are offering several different camps for you to explore. Here are some of the details:

Jun 16-22 Discovery Camp – This camp is a time for exploration and relaxation. Each day will be what you make of it, with opportunities to hike and explore the Sierra Nevada that surround the camp.

Jul 2-4 Women's Retreat – Mark your calendars to save these dates for another amazing, meaningful weekend at Camp for women of all ages. We will share stories study scripture, enjoy great wilderness and eat extremely well. Jul 18-23 Junior/Jr. High/Youth Camp – A week packed full of activities for children in grades 4 & 5: Juniors; Grades 6-8: Jr. High; grades 9-12: Youth.

Jul 23-28 Family Camp – Campers of all ages share meals and activities. During morning sessions, a children's leader will work with children, toddlers through grade 8. Afternoons will have crafts, games, rest and more. A campfire ends each day.



Good News for Knitters

We've waited a long time through this pandemic to get together to knit and visit. So come on Monday, June 14, at 2:00 to Pat Royer's apartment at Casa de Modesto, #1004. We will continue to meet on second and fourth Mondays of the month. Of course, bring your current project to knit while chatting, and bring a completed item or two to share new projects and ideas.

I (Mary) have been given much yarn recently, more than I can use, so I will have lots of yarn for you to take if you're interested. There are various kinds and colors. I will have some straight needles of various lengths and sizes for you to take if you like. I'm going to bring some of my completed items to share ideas. I look forward to seeing you all and renewing our friendships and keeping our fingers busy with our enjoyable knitting. ~Mary Baucher





Now that the weather is warming up, Jolie Lapora is leading our small yoga class outside under the peaceful redwood canopy. Please join us on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 10:45 ish. All skill levels are welcome. Come and see what's it's all about. For more info, contact Elaine Forcier at (209) 345-8015.



June Birthdays

Cica Akpovi -1

Jeanine Ewert - 9

Emily Matteson - 12

Allison Sampson -12

Monique Sanders - 12

Kelsey Boardman - 17

Jolie Lapora - 17

Felton Daniels - 17

Lyla French - 17

Kelly Gephart - 17

Emily Gilstrap - 17

Tony Bates - 22

Margaret Johnson - 23

Mary Pieczarka - 23

Bill Johnson - 24

Terhesa Gamboa - 25

Josh Roy - 27

Welcome Statement

Believing that God's unbounded love and grace, as taught by Jesus, are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, we embrace persons of every age, race, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, physical and mental ability, and economic means as vital and integral members of God's family. As an Open and Affirming congregation we welcome everyone to participate in the life and worship of our church.

MORE



If you know someone else who has a June birthday, please let us know!

Also, please let us know about other milestones, too: Anniversaries, graduations, new jobs, any other milestone in your life!

